

# INBREDDOM

anarchist fortnightly

Vol. 60 No. 6

20th March 1999

50p

## Discrimination? Naturally!

In the aftermath of the Steven Lawrence murder inquiry anarchists should not be surprised at the ritual crocodile tears flowing from everyone from Jack Straw, irresponsible Home Secretary (and his glove puppet Paul Boeteng) to Paul Condon, irresponsible Commissioner (Chief) of the Metropolitan Police.

What we might find surprising is the rate of flow of those cynical juices. Even in World-Hypocrisy-Champions, Britain, the numbers of people in 'positions' who have joined in the hand-wringing juice-squeezing, has been almost embarrassing. Almost? Yes, it only takes a moment's thought before you realise it would be foolish to expect anything else.

Those of us old enough to recall times in the wake of the *Empire Windrush* may remember two things. First, if you were working class, you found that the amount of social control (casual violence, etc.) the police directed towards you lessened. Second, you found that the appearance of a black face split your neighbourhood in two – with the biggest lumpen of the opinion that 'they' should go back where they came from.

So the problem of discrimination on racial grounds is not new. Indeed, any wave of racially, linguistically, or otherwise noticeably different, immigrants can tell similar stories. And on a smaller local scale the tribalism of the parish pump meant that if you moved from where you were born it would be two or three generations before you were accepted.

The people of Britain have always (since 1066 certainly) been divided by race, place, class and position. It is a large part, if not all, of what it means to be British. British society is founded on genetic elitism – ask Her Majesty if this is not so, or any of the thousands listed in *Burke's Peerage*. The most important thing, in a culture of finely divided social layers, is the right choice of parents. Get that wrong and, unless you are happy with your pre-ordained place, you are in trouble.

Ingrained in our culture are the subtle markers of discrimination, even commoners like to 'know our place' to know 'where we stand'. And if, as my Lord Tebbit advised, we get on our bikes and leave our place, we end up in the limbo of British social rejection. Try to rise above your station and you will be knocked back, sink below it and you will be destroyed. Whatever the veneers of meritocracy or egalitarianism, unless you are beautiful, rich, or of some use to the established order, you are stuck in this highly discriminatory society.

Racism is different because it is obvious. But it is no different because it is a part of a social culture that depends upon discrimination to maintain its structure and stability. And that is where our police come in. They have never resolved their function; is it to maintain law'n'order as they claim? If so to which do they give priority, law or order? History would indicate that the maintenance of social order is their preferred function.

In an emotional article ('There is So Much More to Say' in *The Independent*, 26th March 1999) Kathy Marks, who had followed the months of the Steven Lawrence murder inquiry, revealed the shallowness of perception beyond the obvious. "The first time I heard an officer use the word 'coloured' ... I pinched myself. Then five or six others blithely did the same. Asked about it, they appeared perplexed. They had spent

years working in racially mixed areas such as Brixton, they said, and they had never previously heard any complaints about this term. It was at such moments that the depth of the problem hit home to me."

Well, wherever Ms Marks' home is, it is clearly very sheltered, and she has been there too long. Had she attended Courts in past decades she could easily have substituted 'worker', 'idler', 'drunkard', any number of social or class discriminatory insults for 'coloured', and socially mixed for 'racially mixed'. And, depending on your social class, you would have been called 'Johnson', 'Mr Johnson' or 'Sir'. But she would not have noticed these things, because such discrimination was accepted for what it was, part of the fabric of British identity.

The tragedy of Steven Lawrence's death reveals more than one paradox. His parents clearly believe in a reality of British justice which is both more innocent and profound than its usual hypocrisy and reliance upon stereotypes can allow (more obvious when racism is involved, unless it is racism between whites, of course). It is also paradoxical that they were living by the social rules; decent people whose son was trying to climb the educational and professional ladder. Perhaps this is what has provoked the crocodile tears and hit home to so many of the chattering middle classes. If Steven can be knocked off his ladder of social conformity, how safe is the ladder upon which they and their children rely? Is their concern for social order, as exemplified by the Lawrence's, or for the random murder of a particular black young man?

Racism is different because it is obvious. It can draw one into an examination of the naturally discriminatory structure of British society, or it can become a coloured screen used to hide the reality of which it is only a symptom.

Colin Johnson



# Freedom

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## Senseless Census

Following the discussion of the next Census in the last issue of *Freedom* (6th March), the publication of the Government White Paper, *The 2001 Census of Population*, now makes it possible to comment on the official plans for this enormous and expensive exercise in state snooping.

The Census will be held on Sunday 25th March 2001. There was a 'test' in June 1997, and there will be a 'rehearsal' in April 1999. The whole thing will cost a total of more than £254 million and involve a staff of 90,000. According to the Census Act, every single inhabitant of the country must be included, and response is compulsory under penalty of a fine of up to £1,000.

There will be "a slight increase in the number of questions", some old areas of inquiry being extended and some new ones added. Among new inquiries under consideration are the details of "the relationship between each person in the household", which should cause interesting scenes between persons in many households, and details of the income of every individual, which should cause mass mendacity among the upper classes.

The question about 'ethnic group' will be more detailed than the first one in 1991. It is claimed to have 'widespread support', and it will now seek "additional information about people of mixed origin and sub-groups within the 'White' population, particularly the 'Irish'" and about "those communities who would prefer to describe themselves as 'Black British' or 'Asian British'". The resulting categories and sub-categories for England and Wales will be very complex, reflecting the growing influence of political correctness in high places, though they will be simpler for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In England and Wales the full spectrum of ethnic groups will cover White (British, Irish, Other), Mixed (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Other), Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Other), Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, Other), Chinese or Other (Chinese, Other). In Scotland and Northern Ireland, there will be just Mixed Ethnic, and in Northern Ireland there will also be Irish Traveller.

This question is obviously questionable. Without any kind of authoritative ethnological guidance, how are we all meant to identify ourselves? If British and Irish, why not English, Welsh, Scottish, European? Aren't Chinese people Asian? What about Jewish? What about the growing numbers of new refugee groups, many of them technically illegal immigrants, who will hate and fear such questions? Aren't we all mixed anyway? How will the results be analysed? What difference does it all make?

There will also be a new question about religion, intended to help with "identifying ethnic minority sub-groups, particularly those originating from the Indian sub-continent, in terms of their religion" – that is, the Muslims and to a lesser extent the Hindus and Sikhs.

This time the categories will be very simple – just None, Christian ("including Church of England, Protestant and all other Christian denominations"), Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Jewish, Other. More complex questions will be asked in Northern Ireland, and none at all in Scotland.

There are many obvious questions about this question, too, and they are already being loudly asked by Jewish and Humanist organisations. One problem is that this question is such a radical departure that it will involve amending the Census Act, and compulsory inquiry into religious affiliation may indeed breach the new Human Rights Act. Another is that it is far too crude, and needs to be more sophisticated to give any useful information. Another is how it will be answered. And another is what point it is meant to have.

The fact is that compulsory questions about race and religion lay a minefield of trouble. A Census question about ethnic groups makes sense only if membership of an ethnic group is a criterion for particular official treatment, and since political correctness in this country doesn't yet include positive discrimination or affirmative action, or whatever cant term is used for exaggerated attempts to reverse racism, it is hard to see how the numbers of such categories are relevant, especially when they are labelled in such unsatisfactory ways. Far from helping to cure or prevent the virulent infection of racism, an elaborate classification of the population according to ethnic group is more likely to extend and intensify it.

The same is probably true of the growing interest in areas where 'institutional racism' is being identified. Most of these are places where one would expect to find such prejudice and discrimination. The armed forces, the police, the prison service, and so on are all institutions based on violence and authority and hierarchy and competition and tradition and punishment and uniforms and ritual and morale. It shouldn't surprise anyone that one of the ways in which the in-group is reinforced against out-groups is by identifying the former with old-fashioned views about race and colour.

Similarly, schools are increasingly being forced back into old-fashioned ways of education through learning by rote, competition, examinations, tables, inspections, reports, exclusions, condemnation.

It shouldn't surprise anyone that groups which are expected to do badly continue to do badly, or that groups which are expected to behave badly seem to behave badly.

In both kinds of area, the way to cure racism is not to target it as some kind of isolated infection from outside, but to understand how much it is an integral feature of the country we have inherited and how it works both as a cause and as an effect of divisive behaviour in society. And the first step should be to focus not so much on examples of racist behaviour as on examples of non-racist behaviour. Most people respond to sympathy better than to condemnation, and positive propaganda is more effective than negative propaganda in improving an imperfect society.

In much the same way, a Census question about religious identification makes sense only if it is connected to questions about the practical effect of religious belief, such as religious background and religious observance – asking people at the same time which religious denomination they came from, which religious denomination they now belong to, and what religious observance they actually practise. This would show what the real trends are, causing serious difficulty for religious organisations which hope to be able to claim inflated numbers so as to preserve their legal and financial advantages. After all, it is now an

established fact that more than half the population never voluntarily attend any religious service at all, whatever their formal or informal identification. The Census question in its present form seems designed to exaggerate the extent of religious commitment in the country, and will therefore obscure rather than clarify the situation.

It was wrongly stated in the previous article that there was a religious question in the 1851 Census. What really happened was that there was meant to be one, but it had to be dropped – partly because of the difficulties that still prevail – and instead there was a voluntary census of church attendance on the same day as the official Census. This revealed the doubly embarrassing facts that the established Church of England could claim only a very narrow majority of attendants, and that only about two-thirds of those who could go to church actually did so.

The official report sadly acknowledged that there were more than five million people who didn't go to church, and described them as "unconscious Secularists". The number of recusants is now more like 25 million. If the religious question is asked in the 2001 Census, whether in its present form or in some better form, we shall see how many Humanists – conscious or unconscious – there are in the country. And if enough people lose patience with the ethnic question, we shall also see how many Humans there are.



cartoon by J.F. Batters

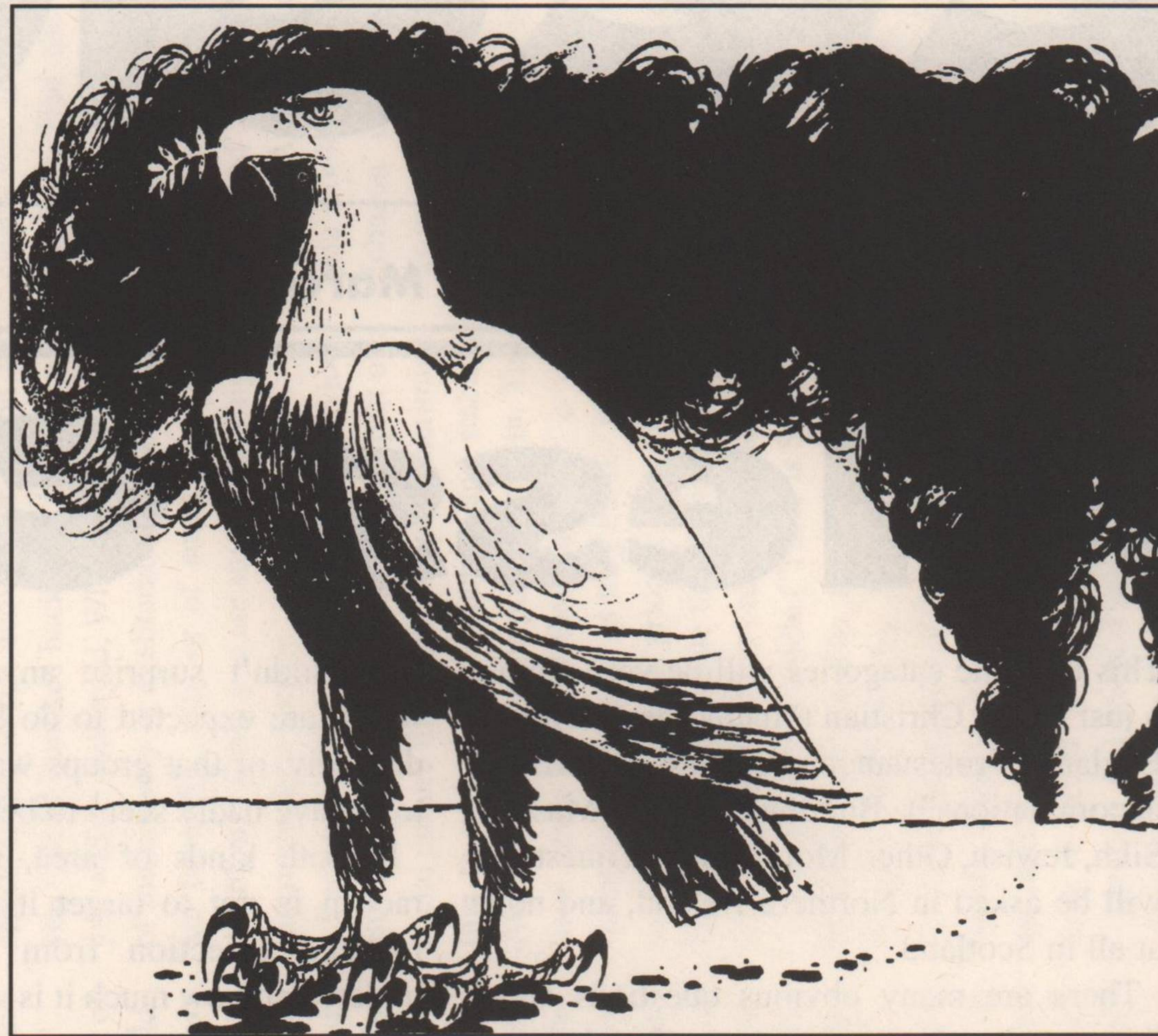
# Bookshop Readers' Round-up

Sam Mbah, a coordinator of the Nigerian section of the IWA, the Awareness League and co-author of the recent and unique book *African Anarchism: history of a movement* (£6.95\*), has been on a speaking tour of the USA. A very encouraging and informative interview with him is published in the latest *Libertarian Labor Review* (no. 24, £2.50) where he outlines the massive problems Nigeria has in every field, the failure of the state system in Africa and the enormity of the task facing those fighting for real social change. There is a major article on the Italian rank-and-file unions, a shorter one on Belgian anarcho-syndicalism, and the final instalment of the series on anarcho-syndicalism in Sweden. Plans to privatise the US Social Security system get good coverage, and other pages carry news reports, reviews and letters. *Libertarian Labor Review* always comes across as factually well informed, committed and non-sectarian, and it must be doing quite well as it is shortly to change its name and go quarterly. When they've decided on the new name we'll let you know.

The current hot topic of racism gets pride of place in *Lib Ed* (no. 29, £1.00), which investigates black children's experience of

British education. Also covered is how unorthodox ideas in economics are kept off the higher education agenda by the denial of research funds, the trials and tribulations of that pain in authority's arse, Chris Searle, and a radical independent school on the Palestinian West Bank.

What caught my eye in *Lobster* (no. 36, now £3.00) was an extraordinary and troubling tale by a former left-wing student who, in 1978, got involved in a relationship with another student whose



*The Turkish state's concept of peace and democracy.*

marriage to a senior civil servant was about to end. The students decided to marry – and then the trouble started. First his PhD research grant was blocked without reason,

then the woman's ex-husband was involved in the failed prosecution of Clive Ponting for allegedly leaking secrets to Tam Dalyell MP. Next she starts divorce proceedings against her new husband, accusing him of marrying her just to get to her ex-husband, but not before setting up some very strange joint bank accounts in hers and her new husband's names, this with the aid of hubby number one's solicitor, now dead. The said solicitor's firm also worked for Astra, one of the 'arms to Iraq' companies (whose chairman Gerald James was prosecuted despite his protestations that he had been working for MI6), and Asil Nadir, ex-boss of the collapsed Polly Peck company. Some people suspect that Nadir's unusually zealous pursuit by various state agencies is connected to his refusal to help the US undermine the Turkish-Cypriot regime of Ralph Denktash, following which stories about him being a gun-runner and drug dealer started appearing in the press. Meanwhile, a series of attempts were made by somebody to establish bogus connections between the student, John Burnes, and various unsavoury groups and individuals.

(continued on page 3)

## Demanding the Impossible?

**Demanding the Impossible? human nature and politics in nineteenth century social anarchism**

by David Morland

published by Cassell, 208 pages, £15.99

For many anarchists this book will offer nothing that is new or original, although it is written in a lucid style, is scholarly, and shows a critical engagement with the subject matter – the classic anarchists Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin. As the title almost implies, it is little more than yet another liberal tract attacking

anarchism, for it argues that anarchy is 'impossible' and thus anarchism a 'utopian' doctrine. The book should have been titled: 'In Defence of Locke: the Inevitability of State Power'. Interesting dialogues with David Miller and, especially, Peter Marshall, run throughout the text, and the political theories of Locke and Rousseau always hover in the background.

The essence of the book is to explore the relationship between conceptions of human nature and political ideology (anarchism) as expressed by the three social anarchists, Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin. The book is therefore fairly circumscribed. Throughout the book Morland seems to argue that there is no necessary link between metaphysics, i.e. people's conception of human nature, and political theory, a thesis that is completely counter and undermines his own critique of anarchism which is the substance of the book. It has long been recognised, for example, that political theorists like Hobbes, Spinoza, Stirner, Nietzsche and Ayn Rand all placed an important emphasis on 'egoism' and the inherent nature of the human person to maintain their own integrity and power. Yet Hobbes advocated an absolute monarch to counter the negative implications of this egoism; Spinoza a democratic republic that promoted freethought and tolerance; Stirner a form of anarchy, a society of property-owning egoists; Nietzsche the cultivation of an aristocratic, cultural elite, a 'new caste' to rule and revitalise Europe; while Ayn Rand (like it appears Morland himself) a minimal state and a rampant capitalism. There thus appears to be no direct or formal link between people's conception of human nature (metaphysics) and the kind of politics that they advocate. Morland seems to confirm this. He quotes and seems to agree with Parekh that there is no necessary connection between a metaphysical system and a particular political doctrine and writes "a conception of human nature cannot and hence does not delimit the precise kind of society that will emerge from its prescriptive function" (page 24). As human nature throughout the last few thousand years has, we suppose, remained roughly that same, and

as human history has evinced many forms of politics (ranging from anarchy – societies with politics but no government – through to the most absolute tyrannies) we presume that the connection between conceptions of human nature and specific political and economic arrangements is pretty contingent. But in order to critique anarchism Morland also has to continually affirm that there *should* be some 'fit', 'coherence' or 'correspondence' between conceptions of human nature and political theory, particularly in relation to visions of the future.

Many political scientists, Morland argues, have tended to suggest that anarchists have a romantic, optimistic view of human nature, entailing a belief in the 'natural goodness' of humans. In an interesting and detailed scrutiny of the writings of Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin, going over well trodden ground, Morland argues that all these three anarchists were not starry-eyed visionaries out of touch with the world, but had a realistic attitude towards humans and to human nature. They thus recognised that both an inherent sociability and an inherent egoism were rooted in human psychology. Such egoism he interprets as covering everything from agency and self-determination to the 'lust for power'. But because they acknowledged human 'egoism' the classical anarchists, Morland contends, could not logically and empirically advocate an anarchist society, a society without a state. Conflating politics and power with coercive government, and seemingly unaware that for most of human history people have in fact lived in societies without governments – on which anthropologists, Barclay, Zerzan, and more recently, John Moore have written at length – Morland argues that human 'egoism' renders a stateless society 'impossible'. With 'egoism' there inevitable arise conflicts and disputes, and these, for Morland, necessarily entail state institutions, although for most of human history such conflicts and disputes have been resolved – or not resolved – through social institutions that have no relationship to the state. To bolster his case Morland highlights the inconsistencies and problematic nature of many aspects of Proudhon's and Bakunin's

anarchism – long recognised and critiqued by anarchists – and is continually engaged in the conflation of moral coercion and public opinion with state coercion. At my mother's funeral I was morally coerced into wearing black, much against my own wishes. But to equate this form of 'coercion' with 'authoritarian' state power is fallacious. Anarchists, of course, have always recognised that public opinion and social norms (not state laws) can be problematic and oppressive.

Morland's essential argument is contained in the following: "Both humanity's ego-centrism and the economic and political disputes that will ensue from this ego-centrism have to be restrained ... Hence the need for the state ... The state's *raison d'être* is grounded in human nature and politics" (page 71). Hobbes basically argued this three hundred years ago. But the state – centralised coercive authority – is there not just to keep law and order or to settle disputes – stemming from our egoism – but to promote, maintain, uphold and, when necessary, defend, systems of social inequality and exploitation, i.e. class interests. This has always been its *raison d'être* ever since the first states arose only a few thousand years ago. As the old liberal Adam Smith put it, government is for the security of property, and is, in reality, instituted for the defence of the rich against the poor, for those who have property against those who have none. Not severing politics from economics the classical liberals had a much more historical sense of what the state is all about than it seems contemporary liberals like Morland who view the state as a neutral referee who simply maintains order and resolves disputes.

Morland concludes the study with two pages of pontification, imploring anarchists to reject the Promethean ethic and the 'crude humanism' that entails an attitude of domination towards nature. He seems unaware that many anarchists have been instrumental in forging a new ecological perspective, from Humboldt and Reclus in the nineteenth century to Bookchin and Clarke in this.

Brian Morris

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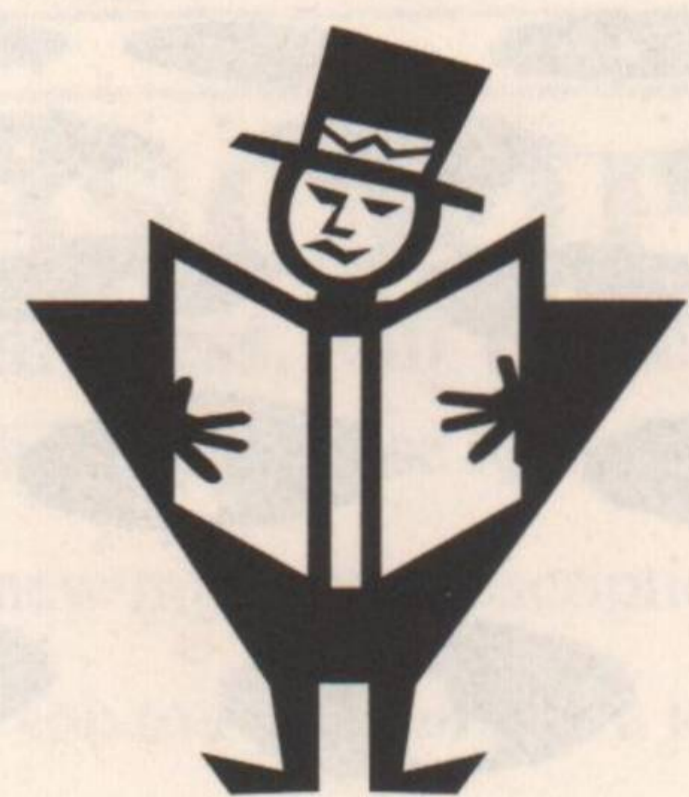
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(continued from page 2)

If you think this is a bit far-fetched, you should read the rest of it. The writer does not seem to be either paranoid or mad, and what I know of the parts of his account which are on public record, fits. Other intriguing connections include MI6 money-laundering, the Dutch immigration authorities, INLA and Howard Marks, Peter Mandelson, MI5 and the KGB. About the only one missing is Uncle Tom Cobbley. I would like to know more. Another main article here is on the Roger Liddle / Derek Draper / Peter Mandelson (again) affair over lobby companies and 'cash for access', and the tie-in with the former SDP and the Atlanticists (a US scheme for keeping the European élite on side during the Cold War). This crops up again in a very useful piece on the Congress for Cultural Freedom, another US Cold War propaganda operation. The now regular Web Update feature lists various Internet sites concerned with electronic privacy and encryption, the millennium and intelligence.

With the recent abduction and arrest of the Kurdish leader of the murderous PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, by Turkish agents in Kenya, now is a good time to examine the history and development of the even more murderous Turkish state and its attitude towards the Kurdish people. The Fifth of May Group, composed of Turkish and Kurdish anarchists exiled in Britain, has produced a handy and informative pamphlet entitled **Fundamentalism, Nationalism and Militarism in Turkey** (illustrated, £1.50). The first half consists of the title essay, and the second is 'Feminism in Turkey' by Mine Ege, already well known for her *Anarchism in Turkey*. The authors have thoughtfully provided a list of abbreviations for the many organisations mentioned, plus footnotes and a chronology of events over the past ninety years.

Given the scarcity of affordable material in English on the prelude to the Russian Revolution *not* written from a pro-Bolshevik perspective, students of this period might wish to try Michael Melancon's *The Socialist Revolutionaries and the Russian Anti-War Movement 1914-1917*,\* from Ohio State University Press. These were the people whose energy and enthusiasm earned them the epithet 'Stormy Petrels' from Lenin, who intended it as an insult. This large, smart, bargain-price hardback shows, contrary to previous histories which assumed that little revolutionary activity took place during this period, that all the revolutionary groups, not least the SR (Socialist Revolutionaries), were extremely active not just against the war with Germany but against the dreadful social and economic conditions under the Tsarist autocracy. Melancon's 368-page illustrated work is the only detailed history of the broad revolutionary movement at this juncture and sets the record straight on a number of points, showing that the Bolsheviks were far less numerous or active than the other groups, or than they claimed, behind the lines on the western front, and that the SR were the only group to make propaganda amongst the peasants. There is also information, especially in two of the chapters, on the activities of the anarchists and their cooperation with other groups, and a good deal of material on labour organisations, both urban and rural. The role of the SR at Kronstadt is also discussed. A well researched, well written work which demonstrates the importance of the pre-revolutionary period and is an easy read, despite its academic credentials. It includes copious notes, a large selected bibliography and a good index. Published at £34.00, our price is £10.95.

Four Eyes

## Simon Jones: institutionalised murder

This month the Simon Jones Memorial Campaign took over the lobby of the Department of Trade and Industry in protest against the official attitude to the death of Simon Jones and others killed at work by careless employers. The occupation lasted an hour and demanded the prosecution of the employment agency, Personnel Selection.

Nearly a year ago Simon Jones, aged 24, turned up to work as a casual on Shoreham dock – less than two hours later he was dead with his skull crushed by a crane grab doing one of the most dangerous jobs with next to no training to do it.

Simon took the job after being harassed by the dole, and out of fear of losing his benefits. The Simon Jones Memorial Campaign asks: "Are dole offices going to start checking that jobs are safe before harassing claimants into taking anything on offer, however crap the pay and unsafe the working conditions?"

Simon got his job through the employment agency, Personnel Selection. His memorial campaign says: "Throughout the country employment agencies make huge profits by providing cheap labour to companies who prefer employing casual labour to employing a well-trained decently-paid workforce."



In Simon's case *SchNEWS* (published in Brighton) reports that "despite every legal channel being exhausted ... no one has been prosecuted over his death". No wonder that his mother, Anne Jones, said: "Some employers seem to treat their workers like machines."

### Cost-cutting means death

Simon died on 24th April 1998, a victim of casualisation in which folk are forced to work in low paid jobs with next to no training, no job security, no sick pay and no holiday pay – meaning more profits for companies, and more deaths and injuries for those who work in them.

Last year only one in twenty serious injuries at work (things like being blinded or losing a limb) were even investigated by the Health & Safety Executive, leaving 48,000 uninvestigated. In 1997 there were 302 deaths in accidents at work.

The Simon Jones Memorial Campaign states: "This government is busy creating a low pay economy where millions of people will be forced to take crappy jobs like the one Simon did or lose their benefit. We think this profits-before-people set-up needs to be challenged before more people like Simon get killed."

### Don't wait for politicians!

Since Simon's death there have been a number of direct action hits against some of the culprits involved.

- On 1st September 1998 thirty protesters occupied Shoreham dock, owned by Euromin, where Simon was killed. Euromin was forced to close the docks down for the day, sending all their casual workers home on full pay.
- On 3rd September 1998 the Brighton office of Personnel Selection, the employment agency that employed Simon on the day he died, was invaded. A banner reading 'MURDERERS' was hung from the windows. A leaflet asking "Why should agencies like this take half your wages when you're doing all the work?" was handed out. The office was shut down for the day.
- On 20th September 1998 a government minister was forced to admit, as a result of these actions, that the government's plans for protecting people at work are "not enough".

Last week JL reports that Earth First! took up the Simon Jones Campaign with an action in Leeds, and earlier this month George Galloway MP in the House of Commons, commenting on the Simon Jones case, said that "James Martell's [Euromin manager] contempt for the laws of health and safety in this country, his greed and hunger for profit, his negligence and carelessness, slaughtered this young man [Simon] just as clearly as if he had pushed him off the dock with his own hands".

Simon Jones wrote for *SchNEWS*, the libertarian direct action movement weekly sheet, and was involved in backing direct action for the Liverpool dockers' fight against casualisation at their port. A leaflet by his Memorial Campaign says: "He knew that if you sat back and waited for politicians to put things right you'd have a long wait".

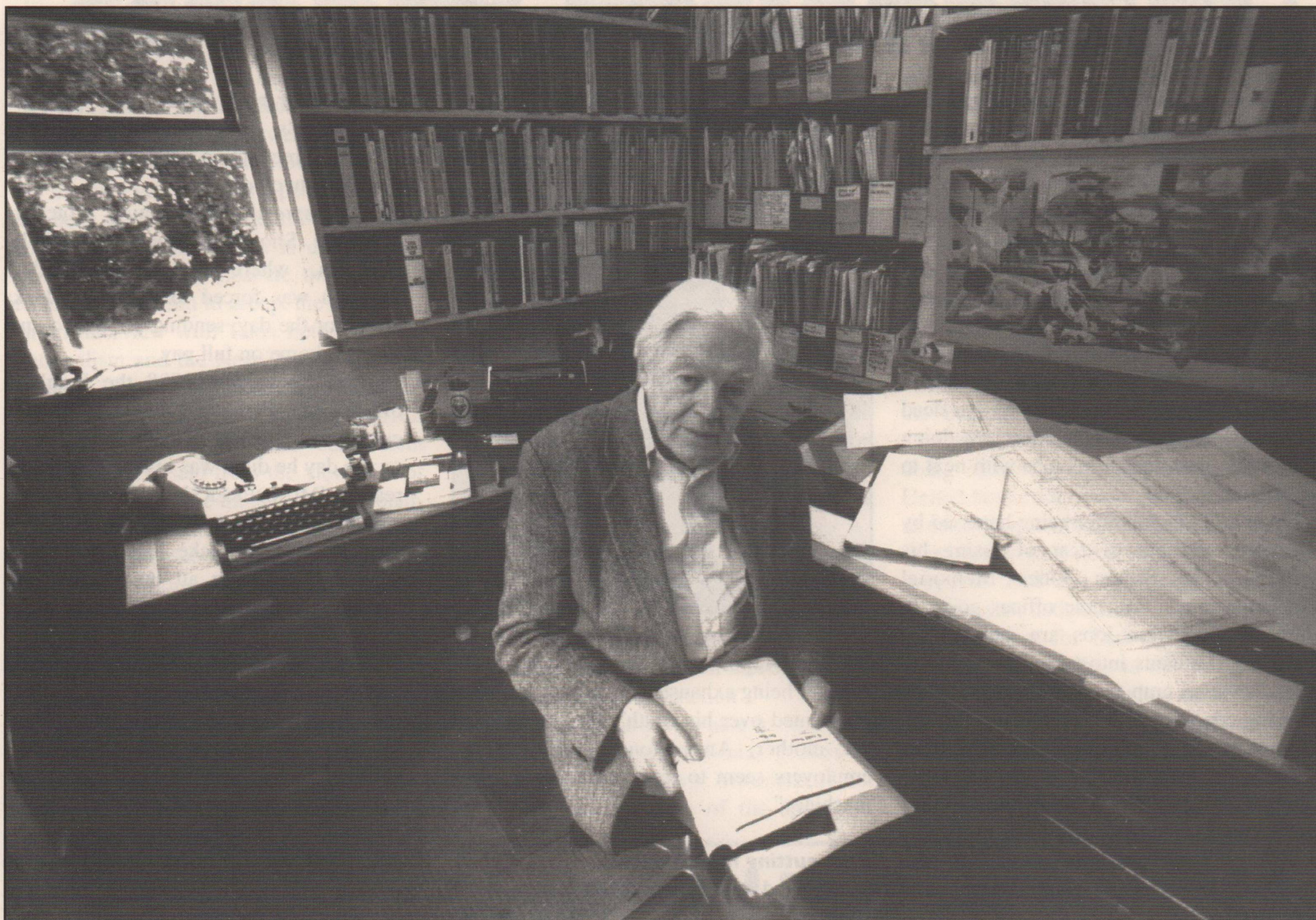
The campaign claims that though every MP has been contacted, it is direct action that will win it.

Arturo Ui

— COPY DEADLINE —  
The next issue of Freedom will be dated 3rd April, and the last day for copy intended for this issue will be first post on Thursday 25th March.  
♦ ♦ ♦  
If possible contributions should be typed using double-spacing between lines, or can be sent as text files on disc.



# Richer Futures



Colin Ward, pictured here between his typewriter and drawing board.

## Richer Futures: Fashioning a New Politics

edited by Ken Worpole

published by Earthscan, hardback £30, paperback £12.95

Colin Ward needs little introduction to readers of *Freedom*. Now approaching the age of 75, he has been an active anarchist since he was 18, and he is the best-known anarchist writer in this country. But he has also been active on a wider stage than our movement, and he is well known beyond such narrow limits. There are several books by him on several subjects, but now here is a book about him and some of his subjects by some of his admirers.

The editor, Ken Worpole, says that the book's starting-point was "a common wish by a number of people active in various educational, social and environmental initiatives to pay tribute to the writer Colin Ward", who "has been one of the most quietly influential commentators on our times for more than half a century", and that it is "a tribute to him and his ideas, a kind of festschrift to celebrate a lifetime of industrious activity, generous friendship and support to others".

Ken Worpole begins his introduction by saying: "This book about a new kind of politics that is emerging to fulfil the needs left unfulfilled, sometimes dangerously so, by mainstream political parties and programmes." In fact it is about one of the oldest kinds of politics, which was suppressed by the growth of the double system of authority and property, but which survives on the edges and in the cracks of the resulting society we live in. It consists of a symposium of ten essays by writers who operate mainly outside the establishment.

Fiona Carnie, the National Coordinator of Human Scale Education, attacks the centralisation and homogenisation of the state education system, arguing with many current examples for smaller and more various schools, run by parents and teachers (and students) on behalf of small communities rather than by managers and administrators

on behalf of large local authorities, in the interests of learning rather than teaching.

Eileen Adams, a Research Fellow at University College, Bretton Hall, discusses the relationship between education, art and the environment. She worked with Colin Ward on the Art and the Built Environment project during the 1970s, and she describes similar work since then, with many recent examples and many pertinent points about education in general.

Alison Ravetz, a Professor Emeritus at Leeds Metropolitan University, discusses the contradictions between state provision and self-help in housing, with a detailed survey of all kinds of initiatives in both areas and also a critical analysis of the relevance of anarchist ideology. The result is an outstanding essay which deserves expansion and wider circulation in a separate publication.

George Monbiot, founder of The Land is Ours campaign and an eloquent *Guardian* columnist, takes up one of the oldest arguments of left-wing thought – the right of access to and use of the land where people live. After a survey of the way land is being monopolised in this country and indeed all over the world, he calls for direct action to take it back. He doesn't indicate how this is to be done, and he has often invoked government action, but here is room for further discussion.

Nicola Baird, an environmental journalist who has worked in community development in the Third World, takes up another of the oldest arguments of left-wing thought – the empowerment of the poor. She describes what is probably an unfamiliar subject to most anarchists, projects in several parts of the world to help impoverished and powerless people combine economic sufficiency and ecological stability, both locally and globally, and thus to build (or rebuild) sustainable communities.

Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at Thames Valley University, directs a devastating assault on every aspect of the expanding food racket – monopoly, cost,

poor quality, poor value, ill-health, poisoning, pollution, transport, erosion, dependency. He offers only a few solutions, mainly a return to consumer production and local markets, and more ideas would have been welcome. He includes a nice account of getting to know Colin Ward's work, finding that "he was everywhere, lurking in the wings wherever non-straight left politics rustled".

Jonathan Croall, a journalist and the biographer of A.S. Neill, gives an account of the Local Exchange Trading Systems, a new form of consumer cooperation consisting of small networks based on barter or non-monetary currencies. The treatment is detailed and informative, but more general reflections would have been welcome.

Colin Ward himself argues for greater integration of town and country, on similar lines to his contribution to the recent symposium on *Town and Country*, edited by Roger Scruton and Anthony Barnett.

Ken Worpole, a former teacher and community activist and an active writer on urban culture and community, concludes with an essay on what he calls – following Colin Ward in quoting (or rather, misquoting) Robert Frost – the 'Path Not Taken'. He rejects the politics of polarity – right and left, state and market, public and private – and

demands a 'politics of sustainability'. He emphasises the apparently marginal, vernacular, informal systems in which individuals and groups run their own social, economic and political lives. This impressively well-argued and well-documented essay picks up some of the themes of the book and throws in several more ideas, incidentally quarrelling politely with Colin Ward's anarchism.

Finally, though in fact firstly, David Goodway describes 'The Anarchism of Colin Ward', incorporating much information about his life and career in general. As would be expected from the editor of recent Freedom Press collections of writings by Herbert Read and Alex Comfort, as well as a more recent symposium on Read, this is a well-researched, well-informed and well-written account.

Colin Ward left school at 15 and worked first as an architect, then as a liberal studies teacher and education officer, and finally as a freelance writer. He came from a Labour family, but made contact with anarchists in Glasgow in 1942 while doing military service during the Second World War, began writing for *War Commentary* in 1943, gave evidence at the trial of its editors in 1945, joined the *Freedom* editorial group in 1947, wrote in almost every issue of *Freedom* until 1961, and for the next nine years edited *Anarchy*, which established his reputation. Afterwards he began writing and speaking more widely and produced several books. From 1978 to 1996 he contributed a regular column to *New Society* and then the *New Statesman* which probably reached more people than all the rest of his work put together. And of course he now writes in almost every issue of *Freedom* again.

David Goodway lists his books and most important articles, discusses his main influences and interests, and summarises his personal version of pragmatic anarchism. This is an excellent introduction to a remarkable person, despite a few minor errors and omissions, and it will become the standard source of information on the subject.

Some other people were meant to contribute to the book, but it is excellent as it stands. It might have been good to have a discussion of the fundamentals of libertarian socialism, but this could have run into trouble. One intriguing point is that most of the contributors are not anarchists, which shows how far Colin Ward's influence reaches. An important omission is the lack of a bibliography of his writings, and an unimportant one is the lack of a picture of him.

It has long been true that every serious anarchist should read Colin Ward's books; now every serious anarchist should read this book too. And we may hope that many other people will do so as well.

NW

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— ANARCHIST NOTEBOOK —

# Inland boat people

I write in advance of the event, but three nights ago I was at a meeting of canal boat dwellers in Oxford seeking ways of resisting the 'gentrification' both of waterways and the land by their side. For the spring issue of *Towpath Times* (£5 a year from Box T, 111 Magdalen Road, Oxford CX4 1RQ) remarks that, "If, as the Treasury is proposing, the canals are to be franchised to developers, what can we expect for Britain's waterways? Accelerated loss of canal-side land to executive housing and offices, certainly; re-routing of towpaths around private developments, and tolls on some canals, probably; but actual closure of canals? Surely not."

It goes on to point out that there is no reason to be sure. Government announcements of belated investment in the canal system may be double-talk for shifting it out of the reach of ordinary walkers, cyclists, fishermen, and boat-dwellers. All this, despite the endless lobbying of the Inland Waterways Association.

I am myself old enough to remember the days when transport was nationalised by the Labour government in 1948. A delegation from the Inland Waterways Association called at the Ministry of Transport to ask about the future of canals. "Oh, do we get them too?" asked a top civil servant. Later, British Waterways was set up as a public corporation controlling two thousand miles of canals and some stretches of navigable rivers.

British Waterways was always starved of the capital needed to restore the canals to their original role, which is still observable in most European countries: the economic transport of heavy goods. By 1990 its annual report was describing its intention to become a "business oriented organisation nearer to the customer". And the Centre for Policy Studies issued a report urging a partial privatisation. In 1991 British Waterways held its first-ever auction of waterside assets, followed by others, bitterly opposed by canal-users because of the rights of access they affected.

Users include the freight and commercial business that the canals were built for, as well as the 'leisure industry' of the hire-boat business that grew up in the '60s and flourishes. But they also include the 15,000 or so people who live in canal boats.

You don't rapidly forget a visit to boat-dwellers, because of their adaptability, their mastery of boat lore, and the way they have a totally different perspective on the English landscape to that of us road users. But we do tend to forget the difficulties they have to overcome, of water and power supply, of waste disposal, but most of all their insecurity in the hands of their 'water-lords' (landlords like British Waterways, river authorities or owners of marinas and boatyards). Jan Price studied their situation in 1991 in a report on *The Right to Moor*.



Tom Cartwright, who lived until 1982, was photographed on the Droitwich Canal in Worcestershire when he was ten years old in 1910 with one of the pair of donkeys used to pull his father's boat 'Three Brothers' (photo courtesy of Shepperton Swan).

She found that it isn't only romantic water-gypsies, in love with boats, who live afloat: "There must be a relationship between the increasing numbers of boat-

dwellers and the lack of affordable housing for rent or sale. It is seen by many as a creative way to meet a most basic need." But restrictions on boat-dwellers have grown since the days when: "If you wished to live on your boat from the 1950s to the 1970s, you did so, mooring wherever you liked." At the posh end of the market, house-boat licences have been required since 1971, and cruising licences are required by people who 'do the system', not staying in one place for any length of time. The intention of British Waterways has quite obviously been to exclude from moorings people who don't own high-quality boats at fully serviced sites, and to sell off every scrap of waterside land.

The Oxford residents I met this week had recently organised a Sunday walk for sixty local residents from the city centre to Wolvercote to see what had become of canal-side sites.

They reported that "the entire canal corridor is threatened, leaving only pockets of reed beds amid acres of sterile traffic-generating developments accessed by a new road bridge over the canal; in the last corner of Oxford where roads can't be heard."

They explained that "the walk was organised by boaters whose moorings are threatened by the rush to build luxury homes. Ironic, considering that the demand for new housing is blamed on family breakdown and the need for affordable single-unit homes." And they asked "Why not provide more residential moorings, with similarly low-impact, land-based community facilities?"

At Banbury, the historic boatyard known as Tooleys' has already been lost. Its site is occupied not by boats but by a car park for Sainsbury's.

Colin Ward

## Something in the water?

The publication of the Macpherson Report into the police 'investigation' of the killing of Stephen Lawrence has allowed the political establishment to wear a mask of liberal piety, brows creased with concern as to how to drive the evil of racism from 'our' society. In truth, were it not for the courage of the family and their supporters there would have been no report, no apologies, no memorial stone. Whenever we begin to think that the power of capital is monolithic and immovable, we should remember the extent to which Doreen and Neville Lawrence – a black working class couple from South East London – were able to resist the whitewash of their son's death.

The Report – its trenchant denunciation of "institutional racism", its calls for anti-racist education – is intended as a palliative. While our leaders 'try to get it right', life goes on the same. On 18th January 1999 Roger Sylvester died in The Middlesex Hospital, five days after being detained by Tottenham police under the provisions of the Mental Health Act. His death will be investigated by the Police Complaints Authority – the same PCA which could find little fault with the Lawrence investigations. More than forty people have died in police custody since 1992. The majority were young black males. Inquest juries have delivered verdicts of unlawful killing in the cases of Shije Lapite and Ibrahim Sey. No officer has faced a criminal charge.

In January 1997 Michael Menson was burned to death by a racist gang. The police decided that he had set fire to himself, all forensic evidence to the contrary, and in consequence his killers remain free. Ricky Reel was chased to his death by racists in Kingston. The police saw only an 'accidental' death.

The Macpherson report tells us that the institutions of the state may be unwittingly racist, but that white working class communities like the estates around Eltham which produced Stephen Lawrence's killers are ghettos stuffed full with lumpen racists. We should all join hands with Jack Straw and pray for their souls. Maybe it's something in the water.

Jack Straw has recently announced his new Immigration and Asylum bill, as an attempt to "minimise the incentive to economic migration, particularly by minimising cash payments to asylum seekers". Asylum seekers will be denied all benefits, dispersed around the UK so as not to form visible communities, and denied even food vouchers if they mount legal challenges to Home Office decisions. According to *Guardian* columnist Hugo Young, the Macpherson Report "will be a catharsis. Nobody, either, can dispute it. Its language may be questioned, but its premise, that racism of every kind is an incontestable evil, is not challenged" (*Guardian*, 23rd February 1999). But racism, it appears, is only an

'incontestable evil' if it is roaming a council estate in south east London. If it is the mainstay of Home Office policy, no one so much as catches their breath

When the *SS Empire Windrush* docked at Tilbury, with 492 Jamaicans on board, eleven Labour MPs wrote to Clement Attlee to raise their fears that Britain might become an open reception centre for immigration. In 1950 the Labour Cabinet set up a secret committee to review "the further measures which might be adopted to check the immigration into this country of coloured people from British Colonial Territories". In 1968 a Labour government passed the 1968 Immigration Act, aimed to prevent Kenyan Asians, expelled from Kenya, with British passports, entering the UK. The 1968 Act is so openly racist a piece of legislation that it prompted *The Times* to respond: "The Labour Party has a new ideology. It does not any longer profess to believe in the equality of man. It does not even believe in the equality of British citizens. It believes in the equality of white British citizens." Racism, as *The Times* then noted, is socially engineered. Tory and Labour governments, in setting limits on 'non-white' immigration, set up black people as targets by making their 'difference' an issue at law. When Jack Straw and Mike O'Brien whip up fears of 'fake asylum seekers' and 'economic migrants', they set the stage for the deaths of young men like Stephen Lawrence. In matters of race, policy

makers like Straw are the teachers, the likes of the Acourts and Norrises just willing and deadly pupils.

What the Macpherson Report wants us to believe is that reform of the police, and the extension of race relations legislation will facilitate the state's more effectively policing the 'entrenched' racism of Eltham, Brompton and the Isle of Dogs. Cause is portrayed as cure. We are sold the notion by the state that 'free movement of labour' is the cause of unemployment, so that the free movement of capital gets off the hook. Yet the connection between a kid in south east London spraying 'Pakis Out' on a wall and an array of legislation designed to put the slogan into practice is always denied.

Although Macpherson would wish us to believe otherwise, anti-racism has always been the property of the working class. Whether it be the self organisation from below of defence campaigns like the campaigns around Frank Critchlow, George Lindo and Darcus Howe in the '70s, or militant anti-fascism at Cable Street, at Lewisham, and through Anti Fascist Action, in hundreds of clashes throughout the '80s and '90s, it has always been the collective strength of working class community which has opposed itself to the racist cancer. Too often black working class organisation has received too little white working class support. It remains the case though that far from being the problem, it is in areas like Eltham that the solution will have to be found.

Nick S.

# Kosovo: sucking-up or stropppy nationalism

What kind of nationalism will come out of the Rambouillet deal for Kosovo? The answer is critical for the USA and the European Union.

By the time you read this a peace deal may have been agreed. As I write, the US trouble-shooter Richard Holbrooke is delivering a sermon to Slobodan Milosevic, the Yugoslav president, to get him to accept the deal.

In an interview with Takis Fotopoulos on 'Nationalism and the New World Order' in the early 1990s, Noam Chomsky made the distinction between what he called 'independent nationalism' and 'subservient nationalism'. He said from the viewpoint of the United States "the threat is not nationalism, but independent nationalism, which focuses on the needs of the population, not merely the wealthy sectors and the foreign investors to whom they are linked".

"Subservient nationalism that does not succumb to these heresies" Chomsky says, "is quite welcome". The important thing is for the nationalist leadership to service their foreign masters as, Chomsky claimed, "is happening in much of Eastern Europe".

The snag is Balkan nationalism tends to be ethnic rather than civic. Ethnic nationalism can tend to threaten what the US planning documents call "a political and economic climate conducive to private investment" and the possibility of the repatriation of "a reasonable return" on foreign investment.

According to Chomsky 'economic nationalism', 'ultranationalism' or 'radical nationalism' often put democratic needs and interests above those of foreign investors. For this reason, as Chomsky notes, "the United States is not encouraging nationalist movements in the former Soviet empire or Yugoslavia". He adds that "as far as I can see - with regard to Yugoslavia, German initiatives (resisted in vain by the United States and the rest of the [European] community), led to rapid recognition of Slovenia and Croatia - the latter, under conditions that virtually guaranteed war, extending to Bosnia as well".

Chomsky seems to approve of 'independent nationalism' where it opposes global multinational corporations.

## Kosovo: Serb colony

But Kosovo exists now as a colony of Serbia. Recently Adam Demaci, a radical Kosovo Albanian separatist who did 28 years in Serbian jails for his views, stated that the peace deal "will not liberate Kosovo from Serbian slavery".

In 1993 Misha Glenny, the BBC foreign editor, insisted that "Belgrade [the Serb capital] has transformed Kosovo into a squalid outpost of putrefying colonialism". Even then Serbia was maintaining a large special police presence in Kosovo. Mr Glenny claimed that "their presence was an unnecessary burden on the Serbian taxpayer ... but essential for the authorities to maintain the fictional threat posed by hordes of alleged Albanian rapists and murderers".

Then, in 1992, Mr Glenny wrote: "The Serbs serving in Kosovo understand their role within the framework of colonialist rule". But, he added, "the Serbs living in Kosovo are genuinely frightened, victims of their perception of Albanians as terrorists, which may be a self-fulfilling prophecy of Belgrade refuses to acknowledge the Albanians' right to self-determination".

Throughout the 1990s Kosovo has been effectively under occupation by the Serbian army. This followed the removal of Kosovo's

autonomy by the Serb government in 1989, and the riots, strikes and demonstrations which broke out at the time in Kosovo.

## Albanian rubbish tip

The 'revolution' in Albania since the end of Stalinism there has had the effect of raising hopes among the Kosovo Albanians of unification with Albania. Two years ago I was in southern Albania and spent some time in the coastal town of Saranda. By most standards it is a depressing place and for the Kosovo Albanians to demand unification with it would be like demanding unification with a rubbish tip.

More recently the tragedy of Albania is now more widely recognised in Kosovo. As Misha Glenny writes: "The Albanian revolution was accompanied by the rapid atrophy of the social infrastructure country-wide, such that living standards had dropped below the level at which normal social psychology begins to function".

In 1992 Mr Glenny was able to write that "in contrast to other national groups in Yugoslavia ... the Kosovar Albanians do not have firearms". Because of the spread of

arms among the general public in Albania after the disruption two years ago, this has also provided weapons for the Kosovar Albanian separatists.

## Anarchist arguments

It was claimed recently by Sahue Michel in *Freedom* that the West are against an independent republic of Kosovo. Yet successful economic exploitation of the Balkans requires peace in the region.

For this reason, and to placate the allies of the United States in the Middle East, the Clinton administration has to be seen to be doing something. As Chomsky noted, the United States does want 'peace and security' in the region, but it also wants a nationalism of a nation state that sucks-up to foreign investors and not the kind of stropppy 'independent nationalism'.

The problem for Serb domination of the Kosovo region is that an alternative society has developed in the region. In 1992 Misha Glenny observed that "although excluded from the official organs of power in Kosovo itself, the Albanians do now have their own political structures". He adds that "in addition,

they have developed a social and economic system which functions with absolute autonomy from the official structures which had excluded them".

Miranda Vickers argues that "communism tended to be regarded as Slav or Serbian and therefore un-Albanian". She continues "It [communism] made little headway in Kosovo, where the popular aim was to be free of Serbian rule".

Another anarchist, Murray Bookchin, writing on Nationalism and the 'National Question', has warned against what he called "highly parochial 'identity politics'" which have cropped up on the 'New Left' as "new 'micro-nationalism'". He claims that identity politics "constitutes a regression from the libertarian and even general marxian message of the 'Internationale'".

The attitude of the left to stropppy nationalism, or 'independent nationalism', or national liberation movements has long been a problem for us. There are clear differences in the approaches of libertarians like Chomsky, who seems to favour 'independent nationalism', and Murray Bookchin who argues that "nationalism has always been a disease dividing human from human". **BB**

The current conference of the Northern Anarchist Network will be discussing the question of Kosovo and nationalism. A forthcoming issue of *The Raven* will deal with Chomsky's politics and linguistics.

# Kosovo and Iraq: two faces of American strategy

Europeans are looking on attentively: Serbia and the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) have three weeks to reach an agreement and stop the fighting which is tearing Kosovo apart. Hubert Védrine, the French Foreign Minister, has even gone to the Balkans in order to give a sign to the combatants that this time the ultimatum is serious. To be honest, Slobodan Milosevic must, once again, be having a good laugh faced with this new threat which is set to precede the next withdrawal (partial probably). A few thousand kilometres away Iraqis are almost certainly in tears as they behold the death and ruins which have been delivered on them in the most complete indifference. The Americans decided unilaterally for strikes on Iraq and without waiting launched a massive bombing. There are evidently two value systems and two policies in the 'new international order' which is no more and no less than a new American imperialism. Reference to the personal difficulties of President Clinton, linked to 'inappropriate' sexual activities, is a useful way of explaining things as it draws attention to the mediocrity of the politicians but it also acts as a media palliative which covers up the underlying reality: the American empire is being built without opposition and in its own way since the fall of the Soviet empire.

## Choosing targets

"Let there be no mistake, there is no country on the planet which is beyond our reach" was the statement from the Atlantic Commander in Chief for the US in 1997. He need not worry. Nobody has had any doubts about this since the Gulf War of 1991.

But he might have added: without asking for the opinion or agreement of any third party and above all without reference to the UN. Those hundreds of missiles that have been launched over the past few months against Iraq have sent this message home to the Middle East and to American allies. What is at stake, as always, is the supply of oil to America at the lowest price and it is important for America to maintain pressure

in this part of the world and to dissuade the oil producers from raising prices or in other words to use oil as an economic weapon as they did in 1973. But the Iraqi target also carries a message further abroad, notably for US allies and competitors: we are the masters, we alone choose the targets and any military intervention must carry our seal of approval.

For the US military strikes against Iraq also provide an opportunity to test their new military hardware and new strategies. Scarcely had they returned from their 'Desert Storm' operation than the strategists at the Pentagon overthrew the strategic concepts of the US and came up with a new doctrine: the Revolution in Military Affairs. This revolution has four aspects. Firstly, the US has (officially) renounced the idea of winning a nuclear war. On the other hand they are preparing themselves to be able to carry out two 'regional' campaigns equivalent to the Gulf War. Then they have decided to prioritise the notion of an information war. This refers not only to military intelligence but also to media control. Media manipulation is not new but with CNN it has broken new ground and the Gulf War has proved exemplary in this case. The latest strikes against Iraq has been the latest opportunity to ensure that all the media and concerned western politicians toe the line. It has worked out fine. Finally, the strategists have realised that domestic opinion wants to see victories on their television sets but with no real deaths and with the heroes coming home at the end of the show. Hence the new concept of 'zero death' (Americans of course).

## Intervening in Kosovo?

Resolution 1199 of the UN Security Council has, since September 1998, called for a cease fire in Kosovo and the withdrawal of Serbian troops. Despite this, NATO, although goaded by the Europeans, has done a u-turn after having blustered and threatened to exact compliance with this resolution by force. However, there would be no difficulty in launching strikes against Serbia in the way

there was with Iraq. A naval presence is permanently available in the Mediterranean and the Americans have NATO bases in Turkey and Italy.

Nor are there any ideological constraints: the Serbian president is just as big a baddie as his Iraqi equivalent. This turn around has revealed to the Europeans, so proud of their little Euro, that when it comes to more serious business it is the Big Brother who calls the shots.

The Americans have rubbed Europe's noses into the fact that they are unable to intervene even on their own doorstep. However, NATO troops will probably intervene in Kosovo in the end, in the form of ground troops. There are good grounds to believe that, as in Bosnia, it will be France which will provide most of the military and that the Americans will pay the bills. Indeed, when the risk of casualties and deaths are high, it is the Empire's allies who provide the troops. The French rank and file will therefore have to bear the brunt of it all (the US really doesn't care) so that this regional conflict doesn't spill over into the wider Mediterranean area.

The US is at war. They are neither defending nor enlarging their territory. Instead we are speaking of an economic and commercial war. Nothing must prevent the free circulation of capital and goods so that American multinationals can maximise profits. "What is good for our businesses is good for the country", claims Al Gore, the vice-president, showing very clearly, that all the attributes of power, especially military, are at capital's service. In order to install a planetary order the Americans need partners and they prefer to convince rather than conquer. But they are happy to make clear that if needs be, they will use the most brutal force. Intimidating the enemy and gaining the acquiescence of partners are the keys to American policy.

In this context and with different end games the crises in Kosovo and Iraq show that the US intends to remain the only super-power in the 21st century. **FG**

translated from *Le Monde Libertaire*,  
10th February 1999

## Information Liberation

Dear *Freedom*,

It was a pleasure to read Nick S's review of my book *Information Liberation* (20th February). Favourable comment is nice, but it is especially good to see the argument taken further with incisive criticisms.

*Information Liberation* describes corruptions of information power in various areas including mass media, surveillance, intellectual property, defamation and research. It also offers ideas about how to challenge information power. It is much easier to describe the problem than to figure out how to overcome it. The sad truth is that in most of these areas, there are no social movements and little systematic action designed to create participatory information systems serving the population as a whole.

Nick provides some fascinating examples of how journalists, newsagents and workers can take direct action against major newspapers that publish outrageously false and anti-worker stories. He is right that omission of such methods is a shortcoming of the book.

On the other hand, I've observed social movements trying to address a long-term media bias against their agendas. When the bias is not as grossly blatant as in the cases Nick describes, it is hard to mobilise against the media establishment. Another problem is that protests against media bias have as an immediate goal a more 'responsible' media. This is a reform orientation that doesn't address the unequal power that is inherent in

any form of mass media.

The challenge is to build on the outrage triggered by gross media distortions to support a longer term project to replace mass media by decentralised, network media. There are similar challenges in other areas involving information, including surveillance, intellectual property, defamation and bureaucratic secrecy.

Brian Martin



Dear Editor,

One of my ethnobotanical friends once said to me that there were two kinds of people to be found teaching in British universities. He described these as the scholars and the academics.

The scholars (Lewis Mumford is an example) think of knowledge as intrinsically a social product. It is thus something to be shared and disseminated as widely as possible. So scholars write in a style that is readable and accessible. As knowledge belongs to no one it is fallacious to treat knowledge as a commodity, or the property of any group or individual. Scholars, my friend said, were essentially egalitarian: they believed in reciprocity and mutual aid, helped others in their work, encouraged them to express and publish their thoughts, and freely shared their own knowledge. Scholars moved freely across disciplines, happily combined teaching and research, and devoted their scholarship to critically exploring social issues and a world outside of texts. They did not promote themselves as gurus, resisted being made into academic icons or experts, and sought no disciples. Nor did they act as patrons.

They were approachable, non-sectarian, valuing the diversity of viewpoints and alternative perspectives, even though expressing their own commitments.

Academics, on the other hand, were quite different. Heidegger and Wittgenstein are prototypes. They treat knowledge as a individual product, either as a commodity, or as something to be kept secret or confined to an exclusive, intellectual elite. Academics thus tend to flaunt with great pretension their own originality and self-importance. To do this they either cultivate intellectual amnesia, or practice a kind of competitive 'slash and burn' scholarship, or write in an 'elevated' or obscurantist, jargon-ridden style, promoting the false idea that obscurity is the essence of profundity. Academics hate teaching undergraduates, still less people outside the university setting, and devote themselves to academic research, usually of an esoteric nature, meeting only with postgraduate research students who they cultivate as devotees. Emphasising hierarchy, academics actively promote themselves as 'gurus' or as academic 'icons' or 'experts', and surround themselves if they can with admiring disciples who promote their own work. They thus actively promote patron-client relationships. Academics also tend to be sectarian, rubbish alternative perspectives, as well as being narrow and exclusive in their scholarship.

My friend warned me that it is difficult teaching in universities as they are full, as Brian Martin's book explores, with aspiring academics. It would also seem that many contemporary anarchists model themselves on the 'academic' style.

Brian Morris

## Asylum Seekers


Dear *Freedom*,

In the last issue of *Freedom* (6th March) Nick S. stated that the Refugee Council has a declared intent to continue to work with the Home Office and that it "helped draw up the white paper on asylum seekers."

I cannot speak for the Refugee Council, but Nick S. is surely incorrect in saying that it helped to draw up the white paper. Indeed in the Refugee Council's March Briefing on the Immigration and Asylum Bill the Council is exceedingly critical of the Bill, concluding by saying that "The Immigration and Asylum Bill introduces a sweeping range of draconian controls upon asylum seekers, without safeguards or accountability" (full text available from the Refugee Council, 3 Bondway, London SW8 1SJ).

Supporters of the Refugee Council are encouraged to campaign against many of the clauses of the Bill. Nick S. appears to be confusing attempts to persuade the Home Office of the errors of its ways with responsibility for them.

Ross Bradshaw

Please keep  
sending in your letters  
and donations... 

## Anarchism and Communism

Dear *Freedom*,

Richard Garner (in letters, *Freedom*, 20th February) argues that Kropotkin shows a contradiction, that his communism cancels out his anarchism. Kropotkin is quoted as saying that "Who, then, can appropriate for himself the tiniest plot of ground in such a city, without committing a flagrant injustice?" (*Conquest of Bread*, page 90) and so Mr Garner states that this means that Kropotkin would be against land "occupied for personal use". He goes further and quotes John Henry MacKay to show that this proves that, for communist-anarchists, "society has the right to control the individual".

However, nothing could be further from the truth. Mackay's argument does not 'trap' the communist-anarchist because it does not accurately portray their position (just as Mr Garner's comments do not portray Kropotkin's arguments correctly either). Communist-anarchism is *voluntary* communism, communism from free choice. Mr Garner states that "it is up to workers to decide to dispose of [their] product, and to control production" and this is true. Communist-anarchism is about convincing working people that their interests would be best served by sharing that product freely with the rest of communist society. It is not about forcing people to become communists, rather it is about convincing them of the validity of communist-anarchism. That is the point of the *Conquest of Bread*, to show that communism is the best means of maximising individual liberty and production. It is for this reason that communism is based on workers' control while rejecting the free market. The communist-anarchist commune is a voluntary association, in other words.

Now, if we look at page 90 of the *Conquest*

of *Bread* we discover that the above quoted comment by Kropotkin is from a discussion on the 'abolition of rent' and the need for 'free dwellings' (i.e. the end of landlordism). A few pages later Kropotkin considers the case of "some poor fellow" who "has contrived to buy a house just large enough to hold his family". He states that "by all means let him stay there" and goes on to say that communist-anarchists would "lend him a helping hand if need be" (pages 95-96). Thus Kropotkin accepts that land *could* and *would* be occupied for personal use, in direct contradiction to Mr Garner's claims.

Is there a contradiction in Kropotkin's thoughts? No more than in Proudhon's when he argued that property was theft (and despotism) as well as liberty. Indeed, in *What is Property?* Proudhon argues that "The land cannot be appropriated" (the title of Chapter III, part 1) which is also, as noted by Mr Garner, Kropotkin's position. The apparent contradiction that MacKay and Garner point to is simply a failure to take into account anarchist theory on their part. Thus Kropotkin accepted that some people would not desire to join a communist-anarchist commune and so their use of land and other resources for their personal needs would be respected. Kropotkin bases himself on the difference between property rights and use rights, between property and possession. The former is theft and despotism (as it means ensures the many work for the few) while the latter is freedom (as the owner and the users are one and the same). By appropriation Kropotkin (and Proudhon) meant not the use of land but the turning of land into private property, the ability to exclude others from land you are not personally using. The apparent contradiction thus disappears.

Kropotkin's argument is based upon this difference. He recognised, along with Proudhon, that use rights replace property rights in an anarchist society. In other words, individuals can exchange their labour as they

see fit and occupy land for their own use. This in no way contradicts the abolition of private property, because occupancy and use is directly opposed to private property (in the capitalist sense). Therefore, in a free communist society individuals who reject communism can use whatever land and other resources as they wish (and can use personally), exchange with others, and so on because they are not part of that society. That is why it is called 'free communism' and why Kropotkin contrasted it to authoritarian or state communism.

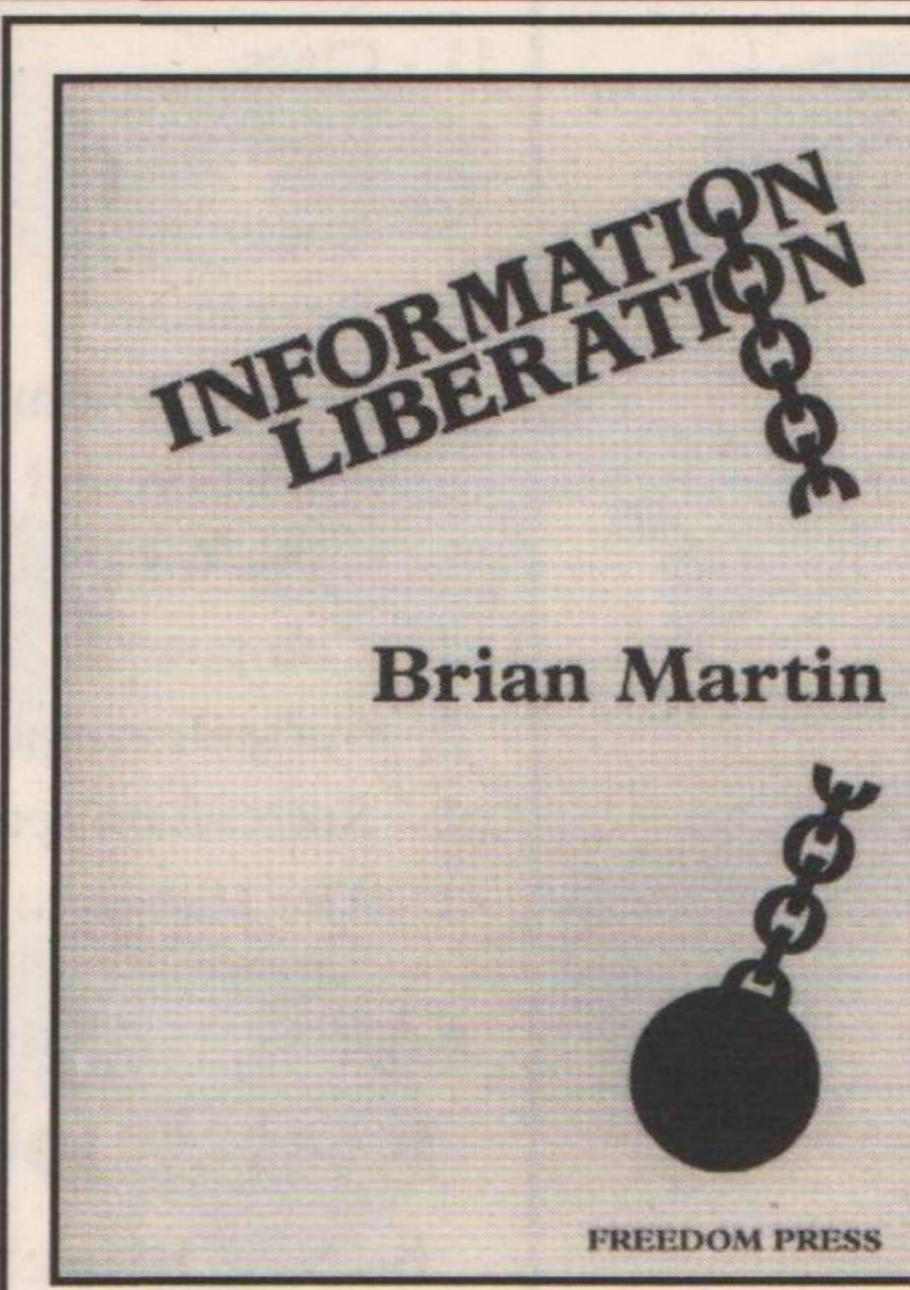
Now, the claim that "workers' control necessitates free enterprise" has been somewhat violated under capitalism (which is not a 'free market' in the sense desired by Individualist Anarchists like Tucker but is a market of sorts). Under the current system, private property has violated workers' control totally. Workers sell their liberty to others in return for access to the means of life (which have been turned into private property). Mr Garner does not address or even acknowledge the fact that private property has led to the owners of such property gaining control over the individual and so denying them liberty during working hours (and beyond). It is because of this that Proudhon, Kropotkin and others rejected the claim that "anybody who holds workers' control and liberty as moral ideals must

recognise private property and the free market as a means of furthering these ideals". Proudhon was well aware that the free market did not, in fact, defend workers' control. He argued for agro-industrial federations to protect workers' control via mutual aid and solidarity (see his *The Federal Principle*). These seem to be the "regulating societies" which he argues would "regulate the market" in a mutualist society (*Selected Writings*, page 70).

Why would these be necessary? Simply because in competition there are winners and losers. The losers in a system based on private property do not have access to the land and other means of life and so have to sell their labour to those who do. By selling their labour they automatically sell their liberty, the control over their body and mind, to another ("property is despotism" in Proudhon's words). Thus private property results in the boss having the right to control the worker. It was for this reason Proudhon attacked property in the name of possession and urged the regulation of the market by agro-industrial federations.

Rather than communism cancelling out anarchism, it is private property that cancels out anarchism. Which is why anarchists have rejected that particular social institution.

Iain McKay



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## Meetings & Events

### The London Anarchist Forum

Meet Fridays at about 8pm at Conway Hall,  
25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL  
(nearest tube Holborn). Admission is free  
but a collection is made to cover the cost of  
the room.

#### — PROGRAMME 1999 —

**19th March** General discussion  
**26th March** The *New Working Class*  
(speaker Peter Neville)  
**2nd April** General discussion

Anyone interested in giving a talk or  
leading a discussion, please contact Peter  
Neville at the meetings (or telephone him  
on 0181-847 0203) giving your subject and  
prospective dates and we will do our  
best to accommodate.

**Peter Neville**  
for London Anarchist Forum

Leicester Secular Society Anniversary Lecture  
with veteran anarchist  
**Colin Ward**  
21st March 1999 at 6.30pm  
73 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 1WB  
*all welcome*

**Rochdale Anarchist Group**  
are holding fund-raising disco for a coach to  
the Smash Blair / Minimum Wage demo in  
Newcastle (10th April) at the  
**Phoenix Pub, Whitworth Road,**  
**Rochdale on Sunday 3rd April from**  
**8pm til late. £1 unwaged / £3 waged.**

**West London Anarchists & Radicals**  
**'An evening of Millenium Paranoia'**  
benefit and social night on  
**Friday 19th March, 8pm to 11pm**  
The Venture Centre, 103a Wornington Road,  
off Golborne Road, London W10  
donation: £2 per person (no bar so bring your  
own, but food and snacks will be available)

### Red Rambles

A programme of guided walks for Libertarians,  
Socialists, Greens, Anarchists and others. Bring  
food, drink, suitable footwear and waterproof  
clothing. A rota of cars will be used - full cars  
will travel to walks.

#### Sunday 28th March

Charnwood Lodge circular walk (Copt Oak,  
Charnwood Lodge, Mount St Bernards). Meet  
at the John Storer House car park, Wards End,  
Loughborough, at 10am. Walk leader Ray.

**Telephone Vivienne for more info:**  
**01509 230131 or 01509 236028**

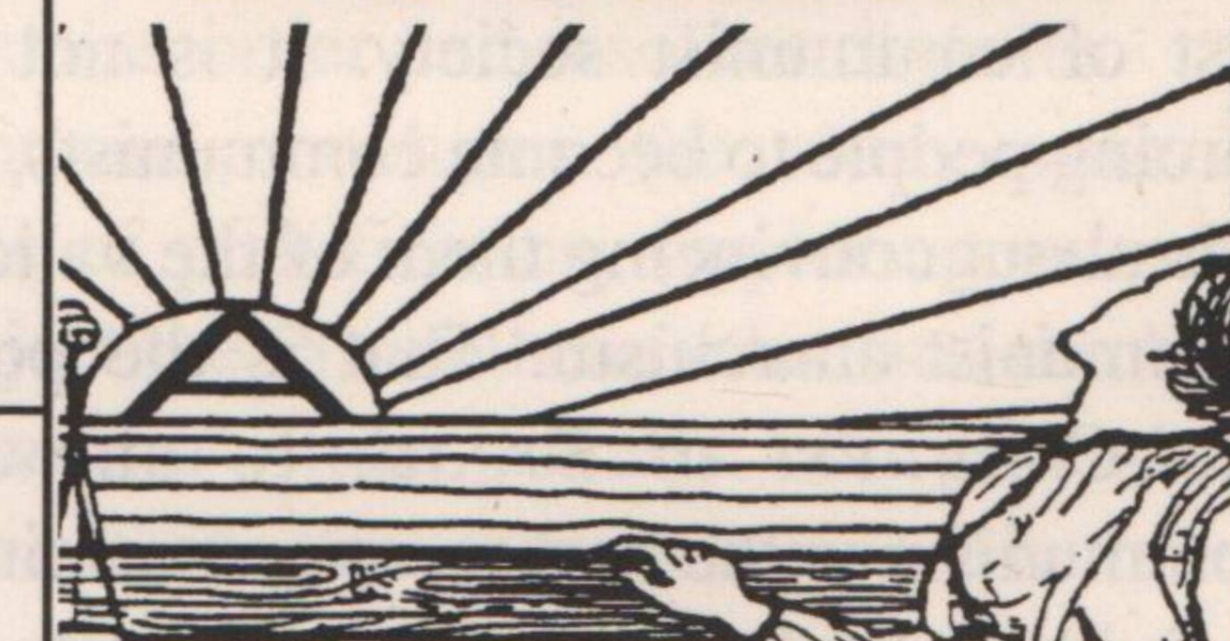
### Diggers 350

In 1649, at the end of the English Civil War, the  
Diggers declared the earth 'a common treasury  
for all', reclaiming all commons as rent-free land.  
Around the 350th anniversary, 1st April 1999, and  
beyond we will be celebrating and reviving the  
spirit of the Diggers ...

20th to 28th March: Week leading to  
occupations across southern England, info on  
0961 373385.

1st April: Discussion and entertainment at  
Weybridge Library Hall, Church Street,  
Weybridge, Surrey from 7pm.

## Fourth Annual Bay Area Anarchist Bookfair



on 27th March 1999 from  
10am to 6pm  
San Francisco County Fair Building,  
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Golden Gate Park

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